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TITLE: Social Power and Condom Negotiation in African-American Heterosexual Adults

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Many HIV risk reduction interventions emphasize training participants in condom negotiation skills. However, there is little research on the social validity or interpersonal consequences of condom use negotiation strategies taught to participants in the interventions, and of partner reactions to the use of specific strategies in safer sex negotiation. This may be of particular relevance to women, for whom consequences of unsuccessful safer sex negotiation attempts may be partner refusal of condom use, or anger, defensiveness, or even physical or emotional violence. Although previous research has explored gender differences in the use of power and negotiation in sexual relationships, few examinations of the use of negotiation in sexual relationships, &w examinations of the use of negotiation strategies have used a theoretical foundation for the selection of these methods of influence.

METHODS: This study used a social power model (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992) to examine the effectiveness of, and partner reactions to, sexual negotiation strategies used by women. Presented are data from qualitative interviews conducted with 48 single, heterosexually active African-American men and women aged 18 to 35.

RESULTS: Discussion will include the following areas: experiences in condom use negotiation; positive and negative outcomes of negotiation; negotiation strategies used by participants and by their sexual partners; what worked best with partners of each gender; and how use of negotiation strategies-as well as their effectiveness-corresponds with specific power bases outlined by Raven (1992).

CONCLUSIONS: Findings from this research will provide important new information needed to tailor HIV risk reduction interventions for women, including better definitions of the types of negotiation strategies that are taught in interventions and strategies by which women can be assisted in anticipating men's responses to their negotiation styles.

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